

## Message Text

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53

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 IO-12 SY-10

USSS-00 EB-11 DOTE-00 FAA-00 CAB-09 JUSE-00 COME-00

AID-20 TRSE-00 SCA-01 OMB-01 RSR-01 SSO-00 /144 W  
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R 301510 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1899

DIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4974

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS LE

SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING SEVERAL WEEKEND INCIDENTS INVOLVING FEDAYEEN THAT PRODUCED CONSIDERABLE TENSION HERE, LEBANESE AUTHORITIES HAVE INSTITUTED HEAVY SECURITY PRECAUTIONS IN AND AROUND BEIRUT AIRPORT. LEBANESE ARMY'S PATROLLING ACTIVITIES ALONG ISRAELI BORDER HAVE ALSO BEEN INTENSIFIED. WE REGARD THESE DEVELOPMENTS AS ENCOURAGING INITIAL SIGNS ON PART OF NEW LEBANESE GOVT. YG SUMMARY.

1. BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT UNDER STRICT SECURITY APR 30 AFTER WEEKEND OF TENSION THAT BEGAN AFTERNOON APR 27, WHEN AIRPORT AUTHORITIES-- IN PROCESS OF CONDUCTING THOROUGH SEARCH OF DEPARTING PASSENGERS-- ARRESTED 3 MEN (2 LEBANESE AND 1 PALESTINIAN) WHO WERE ABOUT TO BOARD AIR FRANCE FLIGHT TO PARIS WITH 10 KGS OF TNT AND DETONATING DEVICES IN THEIR BAGGAGE. UPON LEARNING THAT CULPRITS WERE FATAH MEMBERS, LEBANESE  
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ARMY AND SECURITY FORCES- FEARING ADVERSE FEDAYEEN REACTION WHEN ARRESTS BECAME KNOWN- MOVED QUICKLY TO BLOCK MAIN ACCESS ROAD TO AIRPORT AND CORDON OFF SOUTHERN ENTRANCE TO SABRA QUARTER AND FEDAYEEN STRONGHOLD AT NEARBY SHATILA REFUGEE CAMP. NO REACTION OCCURRED THAT DAY, BUT ON APR 28 AIRPORT AUTHORITIES RECEIVED SERIES OF ANONYMOUS TELEPHONE CALLS THREATENING THAT BSO WOULD BLOW UP AIRPORT FACILITIES IF ARRESTED FEDAYEEN AND THEIR MUNITIONS WERE NOT RELEASED. ONE SUCH CALL, MADE LATE APR 28, ACTUALLY INDICATED BOMB HAD BEEN PLACED IN WATER- COOLER AT AIRPORT TERMINAL, AND HECTIC SEARCH OF BUILDING, SUPERVISED PERSONALLY BY MININT BASHIR AL AWAR AND SENIOR LEBANESE SECURITY OFFICIALS, LED TO DISCOVERY OF 2- KG PLASTIC CHARGE TIMED TO EXPLODE AT 0230 HOURS APR 29 IN A WATER COOLER.

2. AS OF NOON APR 30, ARMY AND SECURITY FORCES ARE MAINTAINING INTENSIFIED SECURITY PRECAUTIONS AROUND ENTIRE AIRPORT AREA, WITH ROADBLOCKS ESTAB. ON MAIN ACCESS ROUTES, CARS BEING THOROUGHLY SEARCHED, AND ONLY TRAVELLERS BEING ALLOWED ENTER TERMINAL PROPER. AIRLINE TRAFFIC CONTINUES AS SCHEDULED. GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF TENSION, HOWEVER, WAS HEIGHTENED FURTHER NIGHT OF APR 28-29 BY EXPLOSION OF STICK OF DYNAMITE THROWN AT JORDANIAN AMBS RESIDENCE FROM PASSING CAR ( NO CASUALTIES RESULTED AND DAMAGE WAS NEGLIGIBLE), AND STRICTER SECURITY MEASURES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THAT NEIGHBORHOOD AS WELL.

3. MININT AWAR HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT GOL HAD RESOLVED NOT TO GIVE IN TO BLACKMAIL IN CONNECTION WITH APR 27 AIRPORT INCIDENT. ( WE UNDERSTAND FROM RELIABLE PRESIDENCY SOURCE THAT AWAR RECEIVED ORDERS DIRECTLY FROM PRES FRANGIE HIMSELF NOT TO GIVE IN TO BOMB THREAT.) LEBANESE ARMY INVESTIGATION OF ENTIRE AFFAIR STILL IN PROGRESS, BUT G-2 BELIEVES THAT AIRPORT BOMB WAS PLANTED BY BSO ACTIVISTS ACTING IN DEFIANCE OF ARAFAT DESIRE TO AVOID CONFRONTATION WITH GOL OVER APR27 ARRESTS AND THAT PHONE CALL WHICH LED TO BOMBS DISCOVERY WAS POSSIBLY EFFORT BY ARAFAT TO ASSIST LEBANESE AUTHORITIES WARD OFF ACTION BY BSO HOT HEADS WHOSE BEHAVIOR HE COULDN'T CONTROL ( DETAILS BEING REPORTED VIA SEPARATE CHANNEL).

4. IN ADDITION TO GOL FIRMNESS WITH FEDAYEEN RE AIRPORT AFFAIR, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY BOTH LEBANESE ARMY AND UNTSO SOURCES THAT LEBANESE ARMY HAS INTENSIFIED ITS PATROLLING IN FRONTIER AREA  
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OVER WEEKEND APR 28-29. PATROLS MORE FREQUENT BY NIGHT AND DAY. THIS IS APPARENT RESPONSE TO CONCERN REPORTED  
PARA 3 OUR 4874.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE UNABLE SAY HOW FAR TIGHTENING UP OF GOL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS DESCRIBED ABOVE WILL GO OR HOW LONG IT WILL CONTINUE-- ESPECIALLY IF IT RESULTS IN ARMED

CLASHES BETWEEN ARMY AND RECKLESS FEDAYEEN ELEMENTS-- WE  
REGARD IT AS HEARTENING INITIAL SIGN OF DETERMINATION ON PART  
OF NEW GOVT THAT HAS YET TO RECEIVE PARLIAMENTARY VOTE OF  
CONFIDENCE.  
HOUOGTON

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NMAFVVZCZ

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